

# SAFETY ALERT



## HEADQUARTERS MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ BAGHDAD, IRAQ APO AE 09342

FICI-SAFE

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Warfighter Facts About Dietary Supplements

### What are Dietary Supplements?

A dietary supplement is a tablet, capsule, powder, soft-gel, or liquid product that contains at least one of the following: Vitamin, Mineral, Herb or Botanical, Amino Acid, or a concentrate, metabolite, constituent, or extract of any of the previous listed. Certain dietary supplements are also known as thermogenics because they increase metabolism and raise temperature. Most of these products contain caffeine, creatine and other ingredients that influence the metabolism of the body.

### Should I take Dietary Supplements? NO!

Active duty, reserves, family and retired military members often take dietary supplements because they are lead to believe it will promote weight loss, build muscle and improve performance, increase energy and improve health. These beliefs are perpetuated by marketing and advertising by the manufacturers and have resulted in increased purchasing and use.

### How safe are Dietary Supplements?

1. Many members of the U.S. military have had serious problems stemming from dehydration, seizures, disorientation, migraine headaches and even death as a result of dietary supplement use. Safety is a major concern since the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate or oversee the dietary supplement market. Manufacturers can put unproven claims on packaging.
2. The risks of dehydration and heat injury increase dramatically in hot environments. If the outside temperature exceeds body temperature, heat cannot be dissipated by radiation. The product manufacturers often recommend the intake of water while using this product to maintain the optimum level of hydration. Use of thermogenic supplements in combination with the extreme temperatures in this region and the lack of cooling when wearing IBA and other protective equipment presents a very real hazard to the user. The temperature increase as claimed by the manufacturer of these products will add to the already compromised body temperature and place the individual in significant risk for a heat injury.
3. Read the ingredients label and understand what you are putting into your body.

**REMEMBER, IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS**

### Most Commonly Used Supplements:

Caffeine  
Androstenedione

Amino Acids  
Creatine  
Glucosamine

### Most Common Side Effects:

Irritability, nervousness, dehydration  
Increased estrogen levels in men  
Reduces good cholesterol which protects against heart disease  
Gastrointestinal distress  
Gastrointestinal distress, nausea, diarrhea, muscle cramping  
Gastrointestinal distress, elevated blood sugar levels

**Guidelines for Using Supplements:** If you decide to use supplements, obtain your health care provider's approval and do not exceed dosage recommendations.

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RAYMOND T. ODIERNO  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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